/41 cont./

Chapter XI

What Role Do the Piaches Play?

800 91. The old and traditional. 92. Initiation of the piache. 93. The piache's equipment. 94. Illusiogenic substances. 95. Sessions of piachería. 96. Honorariums, diet, not ventriloquism. 97. The other curers. 98. Legendary piaches. 99. Imagination once more. 100. The piaches and our religion. 101, Not worshipers of the devil.

●756 91. This question, which was asked me by one of my former mission companions, fits here like a ring on the finger; since, having dealt in the previous chapter with the Indians' illnesses, it is logical to speak now about their curers. Aside from the new ideas that we can get about the piaches, the fact that they are curers is extremely fundamental and real.

[193] Piache is said in the Pemón language pia-san, which is the plural of piai and piachí and from which with a slight variation comes our Castillian word. Literally it means predecessors, ancestors, the trunks or bases of the human [192] genealogical /42/ tree. The word, thus, has a connotative flavor of something old and connected with the traditional. [173] And, in effect, the piaches are the sustainers or maintainers of the small native oral tradition and are its most zealous guardians and those who admonish and frighten them against the innovations or the scorn of the younger generation in matters of beliefs and customs.

92. The piache, in order to be recognized as such, must [824] submit to an initiation. This consists of long fasts and large potions of tisanes, made of the macerated bark of special trees such as the ayú, the pirkavá, and leaves of kumeré and kavai [273] (tobacco), etc. The drink is given them by the teacher or instructor in such a quantity that it is not lethal to them. These dosages produce in them great intestinal disturbances

/42 cont./
and vomiting and even fainting and paroxysms. It is exactly during one of these that the initiator must furtively deposit various small stones of more or less crystallized form among the vomit. These stones will henceforth be his iai or yachi (from which it is also possible that the name of the piaches may have been derived), a sort of amulet, in which are supposed to dwell hidden protective spirits, which will help them at dangerous or difficult times and in the solemn moments of tumayá or piachería.

In addition to beverages, some of them are treated by introducing through the nose and removing through the mouth strings impregnated with vegetable substances, to which they attribute magic properties or mysterious forces; they even go so far as to pass sharp grasses through (with the inevitable bleeding) for the purpose of obtaining a resonant and powerful voice. The piache must have a good voice, know the usual songs, and be able to assume different voices; this will be easier for him if he knows several languages, even though only a few words or phrases in them.

93. The piache's equipment consists of: the murei, or little bench with a figure, generally of a monkey, on which he sits to sing; the afore-mentioned yachí, or little stones; the kachiuotó, or special little bed for ingesting through the nose the juice of kumeré or tobacco leaves; the pipe, or tamuiyén, since they also make use of tobacco smoking, and finally, bundles of leaves of ayú or pirkavá instead of the maraca in general use in other tribes, which they employ to accompany the singing and to create various illusions.

94. The piache goes into a trance by ingesting through the nasal passages the above-mentioned beverages; he always works at night and in complete darkness and in a completely closed in place. Piaches make believe that their soul goes away from them and that with the magical force /43/ of the beverages, the tobacco smoke, and the noise of the leaves, it opens the doors of the hills where the maurí live, enters into

/43 cont./

787 conversation with them, discovers the cause of the illness,
755 takes away from them the spirit (energy, vigor, or health) which they had taken from the Indian, and returns it to the sick person, who should begin to improve.

• 756 There is no doubt that the piache is a subject of autosug-
787 gestion, an hallucinated person who believes in his own lies. In order to understand this better we must bear in mind that the ingestion of the said tisanes and others such as peyoth, meczal, yagé, miguarano, etc., produce not only inebriation, but also hallucinations and imaginative illuminations, even in distinct colors, by which some name these illusiogenic substances. And as the soul is for Indians with respect to the body, blood and vigor, and in with respect to the spiritual the interior eye or imaginative faculty, which is the most vigorous and vivid, the result is that he has the imaginative lucidity
[171] for spiritual illustration. These customs and beliefs have already been observed with regard to the Mexican Indians by López de Gómara, Pedro Mártir, and Lafitau, and other colonial writers.

755 95. It is necessary to have attended piachería seances --
787 I call them this because of their similarity to the seances of spiritualists-- in order to understand the bewitchment or hyponotization that can be produced in sick persons and even those who are not sick. Three or four times I managed to attend and I retain the memory of this grandiose and impressive aesthetic and psychological phenomenon; I still seem to hear the resonance of the various songs of the piache in the deep silence of the night and inside the round huts; I can still hear the cadence of the sheaves, which now would be rustling like a forest in a hurricane or now would sound like a grove of trees stirred by a gentle breeze; I can still hear the imitation of birds or animals, the remarkable imitation of noises that go off or come close, of spirits who went up or down, beating on the ground with force, of a multiplicity of persons who were conversing, and a thousand other things, some of which made one drowsy and others which made one's hair stand up.

/43 cont./

755 96. The piaches do not customarily work for a fixed price, but the Indians, according to their ability to pay and their gratitude and according to the good or bad results of the cure, make them gifts as they freely wish.

● 756 The piaches believe in the obligation to abstain from cer-
755 tain foodstuffs, principally on the day of and the night before they must perform.

755 In the cases I witnessed I did not see that the piaches were
787 /44/ real ventriloquists or that they "were talking big," as the ancients would say; they only imitated in an ordinary way different voices, with the help of the hand and quickly changing posture and place. (Darkness was a help to me in following all their tricks and illusions, both in this and when they pretended to go up in the air and down again.)

755 97. All the Indians, to a greater or lesser degree, believe themselves capable of curing by means of charms and at the
755 same time capable of producing evil effects; but naturally they
756 believe the charms and magical blowings cast by the piaches are much more efficaceous and fearsome. Among the latter as well there are degrees; and they usually consider to be the wisest of those initiated in other tribes or coming from them. For this reason the piaches sometimes say that they can do nothing to cure certain diseases, because they have been caused by other piaches who live in distant regions and possess other secrets unknown by them.

538 98. In tales and legends, more than in real life, the
756 Indians consider their piaches to be diviners and miracle workers. Thus for example, they attribute to Chirikavai or Apakavai: that he carved off human limbs and put them back on as one would put together and take apart a clock; that he turned his yachí and his pana-darí (dependents) into birds; that he was able to interpret their songs as if they were conversations of people; finally, that he ascended to the sky preceded by his nephew Marité (Scorpion) and that with his equipment and his limbs he created several constellations, among them Tamuekán,

/44 cont./

538 or the Pleiades. The Indians also say that he converted his wife
● 756 into a little melero /"honey dealer"/ dog, his little son into a frog, and that the spawning of fish at the beginning of the period of heavy showers of rain coincides with the day when Chirikavai hit the ceiling of the sky with a great shaking, thus giving rise to the storms and showers of the winter.

Of Maichapué, another of the legendary piaches, they say that he converted little pieces of cassava and ají into a number of birds that might alert him to the nearness of his enemies, that he was helped by his yachí in the difficult undertakings to which he was submitted as a test by his father-in-law, Anhuoná or Etitó (king of the two-headed vultures), in payment for his daughter, whom he had stolen away by astutely pretending to be a decomposing corpse.

756 Not long ago the Indian, Daniel Karoi, a resident of Santa
[115] Teresita de Kavanayén and his sister Luisa, who came from the Tiriká River, told me that their grandfather had been /45/ a piache and that he lighted his pipe without needing fire and that he could rise and play the part of the murei as if he were a real monkey. I do not know with certainty up to what point the piaches' deceptions can go, but I do not believe -- from what I have seen -- that these go beyond childish and easily uncovered tricks; I deduce this from the great admiration which they manifest for our magic tricks and little tricks of combination and prestidigitation.

000 99. This brief study of the piache will once more convince my readers that when imagination replaces intelligence and phantasmagorias replace reality, among Indians they can come to be a fertile source not only of tales and legends, but also of falsified religion, falsified medicine, etc. Therefore, Coué wrote quite correctly although with obvious exaggeration: "it is not will which makes them work, but imagination." And A. Bouyssonie also wrote that "magic is a materialistic falsification of religion."

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100. The colleague who asked me the question about the piaches' arts and tricks particularly consulted me about my opinion concerning the possible conflict or the possible opposition between the piaches' ideas and Christian ones and about the correctness or not of administering our sacraments to them.

My personal opinion is that the piaches are neither more nor less fit to receive our Christian teachings than other Indians and with these teachings the sanctifying sacraments of baptism, confession, communion, matrimony, etc. I do not find any essential conflict between their beliefs and ours, which could make the sacraments invalid or illicit; I believe that all that is needed is to complete and modify some of their beliefs. I believe also that the Indians, like other simple people, do not handle ideas as do more logical and intellectual people, by comparing and analyzing, and as a result, letting some ideas lead to others; I believe rather that they proceed by stratifying ideas, that by placing them in different planes they do not seem to be contradictory, although they might sometimes really be so.

There would occur, according to this opinion of mine, in the intellectual order, what happens in matters of garments, which is, that many Indians under our clothing retain their old garters, bracelets, and loin-cloths, and of course, tattooing cannot be changed like a shirt.

101. It is clearly necessary to get rid of the idea that the piaches are invokers of Satan or the devil, that they offer /46/ sacrifices to the devil, or that they are possessed by him when they are in the trance of piachería. They can well be possessed by the spirit of tobacco or of other vegetal plants; and they can be called invokers of the devil, or better, of devils, taking this word in its etymological sense of genii or personifications of natural forces. This idea can be seen worked out more thoroughly in the chapter that we shall devote to the study of the religion of these Indians.

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● 756 114 When I write this I refer not only to former writers, who wrote in the old way, but also to many modern writers who copy these old ones and continue thinking in their simplistic manner in this so important matter. I refer particularly to this definition of piache, which I accidentally found in the Enciclopedia Espasa: "Piache. Tricksters who presided at the cult of the two divinities Katchimana and Jolokiamo worshiped by the Indians of Guiana. They declared their oracles by means of a sacred trumpet."

Of the Indians of Guiana, and precisely of those who live in the very heart of this region, I am writing these pages. I shall let pass this calling the piaches tricksters, since they are (for us) something of the sort; but this matter of "divinities" and of the "sacred trumpet" and of the "oracles" are pure inventions or poor interpretations. I don't know what the Katchimana can be, but I am sure that this Jolokiano /sic/ is a transcription and erroneous interpretation of Iurok-yamá, foxes, a name whose semantic extension is not difficult to attribute to our Christian ideas learned by the Indians. One should not put new wine in old skins, but old wine must be put in new skins: old information should be classified and made to fit modern standards and methods in the sciences.

Chapter XII

What Is There to the Magical Arts of the Indians?

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102. Backward or retrogressive? 103. Opposition of magic and religion. 104. The eternal struggle. 105. Magical fear and conjury vs. reverential love and invocation. 106. The philosophy of magic. 107. Deductions about homeopathy. 108. Idem. about sympathy.

/52 cont./

eyes, speak to him, and hear him." But the Indians, while they do have these beliefs, have great fear of disembodied spirits or orodán, and, rather than invoking them, they try to get them out of their minds; they customarily abandon the places they have lived in and destroy the tools of their dead, avoid giving the same name to their children, avoid formulas that may recall the dead person to mind, and even show displeasure when they find themselves obliged to have to say the name of the dead ones. I often noticed this reluctance when inquiring for a name in order to make notes or records and heard older persons urge the younger ones, saying to them: "Tell him, nothing will happen to you; it is the Father who is asking it of you."

So that the invocation of the dead is only practiced by the piaches, and even this only rarely: it is heard in some stories and it is said of piaches of old.

112. As for omens, not all natural events or occurrences are interpreted as presages, but only a few are traditionally admitted as such. We thus have among others:

a) A spider that hangs down from the ceiling is a warning that some traveler will arrive that day to hang his hammock in our house.

b) The cry of roosters at an unaccustomed hour is a warning that they /others/ are speaking ill of us.

c) A peculiar humming in the ears is the voice of the dead who are calling us and to this they customarily answer "ete-pai pra /53/ edai" (I don't want to go), moving the hand at the same time near the ear like one who is waving away flies.

d) An unusual commotion from the hens, paujíes, or hen turkeys, that run around as if they were crazy is a sign of the imminent arrival of persons who are beloved by us.

e) The song of the bird called pikā is generally a bad omen, announcing deaths, just as we are accustomed to say about the bittern; sometimes a different song of the same bird is interpreted as a good omen for hunters.

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776 That the Kanaima customarily hides behind some tree, which is at the side of the road; that he first attacks by lashing at the eyes or entangling them with vines; that then he falls on his victim with sticks; and finally he blows (a magical blowing) on his head and on his feet so that he'll get sick.

776 That ordinarily the Indians do not die at the hands of the Kanaima, but several days later; and that they must neither /two plates appear here/ /65/ say that they looked on Kanaima nor that Kanaima caught them, but that they saw a tiger or that they tripped over a stick, etc., until such time as the danger may pass, because otherwise they might get even sicker.

That the cry of the Kanaima (let us say the war cry) when he attacks with other companions is "Sové!" or "Soé!"

That for no reason and never does the Kanaima attack those who are not Indians.

139. They also say, endowing the Kanaima with magic properties, that he sometimes converts himself into a fox and goes to dig in the graves of Indians killed by him; and that at other times he converts himself into Auoineripué, a legendary being who drinks the liquid of decomposing corpses, which is his kachirí and with which he becomes mad.

Finally, that the Kanaima does these evil things to Indians for revenge, since they expelled them from their land, and from envy, since they are poorer in belongings than the Indians themselves.

776 781 And thus we have in conclusion that the Kanaima is the bogeyman and more than the bogeyman of all the Indians; a sort of persecution mania, which has taken over their weak minds; an almost incurable illness, since they believe that there is no possible remedy for anyone who has been caught by Kanaima and that there is no other recourse than to get into the hammock to die, if there is no enchanter who can come to cure him with stronger blowings than those of the Kanaima.

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776 761 And, on the other hand, if there were no Kanaimas, the Indians would be immortal or slightly less than this, since there is scarcely a death that they do not attribute to Kanaima.

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[756] [554] [593] or that some Indian, be he a good worker and that he gets drunk often or has many women, daughters /sic/ and sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, whence proceeds some good kinsmen and these obey him as an elder relative; or by dint of valor they respect one who is so and in war has killed some Indian or more; and in conformity with those whom he has killed they make him that many crowns and give him that many names."

114 This and other simple reports, made without affectation and straightforewardly, show very clearly the exaggeration of some old chroniclers and some modern /91/ fiction writers when they describe various caciques in the style of classic histories, but very far from the plain truth and the unvarnished truth of ethnography.

Chapter XXIV

Do the Indians Have a Religion?

000 198. Religiousness, a human characteristic? 199. The difficulty in studying noncodified religions. 200. Comparison with the study of language. 201. Preconceptions of the missionaries?

198. Another of the characteristics generally attributed to mankind is religiousness. "The former Mission companion," from the way in which he asks me the question, is also among those who believe that there cannot be a race or tribe, a horde or whatever, without religion.

This is what Cicero was thinking when he said: "There is no nation either so savage or so fierce that, even when it be ignorant of which God it ought to have, does not know that it ought to have one." And thus thought and still think, doubtless, the majority of men. But in this, as in everything, there is no

/96 cont./

774 Correlative to this belief there exists among these Indians animism, which, like all the other -isms, more than a theory or elaborate doctrine, is a mental tendency which consists, as Grandmaison says, "of imagining everywhere, behind perceptible objects, life, activity -- by extension, will, powers, passions -- more or less traced from the human type, anthropomorphic." Thus also Mons. Valbuena says of animism, that it must be considered "not as a religious factor, at least in principle, but as an intellectual conception, as a general mentality."

776 b) These piá or -imá (call them genii, godlets, or numbers) are neither offended nor pleased by moral or immoral actions, but by physical actions -- sometimes substances -- which are damaging or pleasing to them or to their descendants.

753 To the native mentality true good things are this life and that which is related to it, health especially, food, etc.; and the bad things also true are illnesses /two plates appear here/ /97/ and pains and, especially, death, the most terrible and most feared evil, not so much because it is the unknown which opens into the beyond, but principally because of the loss of the good things and family so loved here.

775 To the Pemón there is no doubt but that the soul survives,
787 although this conviction is not deduced by them from logistic arguments, but from intimate personal experience and from very vivid imaginative impressions while asleep and in other states of exaltation.

● 756 c) Finally, we have in place of acts of worship various
788 observances, based on a belief in the afore-mentioned numbers
778 or potorí; in place of priests, the piaches; in place of prayer, the charms which we have already defined in another place, and, in lieu of the supernatural, the magical.

789 We would say once more that magic, although dealing with spiritual influences, is not religion; it does not deal with morality, but with physical acts, corporally maleficent or beneficent, psychic only insofar as the soul is united with the

*192 273 234. Drinking bout — etaripan. (A jocose suggestion was made that this is the origin of the tribal name Taurepán.)

*192 535 235. Dance (in general) — eren.

Social dances (these are more exactly characterized elsewhere):

236. parichara.

237. tukiiˀ. Literally "humming bird."

238. warepan.

239. warepan — müirepɔn.

240. ware.

241. katoiˀ.

Magic (or piache's) dances:

242. mari

243. - 244. ɛrɛmba, with several varieties according to the purpose, e.g. okõyima-ɛrɛmba, for bites and ulcers.

245. Parichara costume: as a whole — parichara-pon.

246. head-dress — aroˀ.

247. skirt — (i)maripadai (cf. maripa, No. 443, from the leaves of which the skirt is made).

*192 k. Magic and religion.

*197 [256] 248. *Medicine-man (shaman, piache) — piatsan. Taurepán (Koch-Grünberg) piasan. Cumanagoto (Adam) piache. This is, of course, the origin of the Venezuelan Spanish word "piache."

*192 *197 276 [254] 249. *Canaima (a sort of evil person or spirit, see section on religion) — kanaima. This word and the strange idea that it represents are practically universal among the Caribs. Williams shows beyond much doubt that our word "cannibal" comes (through Spanish) from this word and not, as has been generally accepted, from the name of the Caribs themselves.

250. *Evil spirit (personal name of a spirit) — piaima. In British Guiana piaches are called "piaiman" or "peaiman" and it is supposed that this is derived from some form of piatsan (even Williams apparently subscribes to this, quoting in Thurn to this effect without criticism). However, this is clearly the word piaima and in Kamarakoto and Taurepán, probably in Carib languages generally, piaima is an evil spirit or mythical being, a familiar of the piaches, perhaps even a sort of celestial piache, but not an actual human medicine-man. Moreover in these two dialects piaima is a name of one particular spirit, not a general term.

*192 ●956 251. Bench used by medicine-man — murei.
(See also kabai, No. 413, kumi, No. 415, mari, No. 242, and ɛrɛmba, No. 243.)

Geographic Terms and Names.

*192 104 These words are generally and properly classed under "Nature," but I segregate them here because of their wider interest to travelers and cartographers. For this reason also, an approximate transcription, using only letters of the Spanish alphabet, is also given for each of these words and recommended for cartographic and similar uses. Aside from the impossibility of closely approximating the sounds ə, ũ, and õ in this way, the principal question is the transcription of k and w. The use of k looks barbaric in Spanish, but the necessary forms que, qui, will generally be mispronounced by English-speaking persons, who should also be considered, and the names are barbaric after all, so that there is no serious reason why they should not appear so and I have used k. I have, however, substituted u for w, as this will usually be pronounced approximately correctly, and w will be mispronounced by all but English-speaking persons.

*192 823 [193] a. Terms.

252. Mountain, peak, rocky height — təpũi. This is properly a suffix used in names of mountains, e.g. auyan-təpũi. Cartographic transcription:- tepúi. This is very poor as almost any other Spanish vowel is as close to ə as e is, but it is already established in general usage. -tepúi is preferred to the also widely used -tepuy. Note that such generally used forms as "Mount Auyantepui" or "Cerro Auyantepui" are redundant. It should be simply "Auyán-tepúi" or "Mount Auyan," "Cerro Auyan."

253. Mountain — wei (not a suffix).

254. Hills — wõyõpũi, a poetic word heard only in songs.

* 192 *197 823 [193] 255. Savannah, sabana — ita.i, suffix form -ta.i, e.g. Uruyen-ta.i, "The Uruyen sabana" (do not write "Uruyen-tái sabana"). Cartographic transcription: itái, -tái. Taurepán, itõi. The Taurepáns apparently use the next word more commonly in place names, where the Kamarakotos would use this one. Makuchi (Williams) e-tei.

256. Open valley bottom, extensive sabana — rəmon, (i)rəmun. Cartographic transcription: remón. Taurepán, rəmon. In Kamarakoto, a rəmon may be made up of a number of different ita.i's. Kamarata, as a whole, is a rəmon, but

643 When I asked what would happen if the Indians could not agree on any one per-
[57] son as cacique, my question seemed hardly to be understood. "We do agree; we are good; we do not fight." After such assertions, it was finally said that if some to?-esa?, or several of them, resolutely demanded a different chief the teburu would appoint one for them (he would be called to?-epuru?), but their chief would be subordinate to the teburu. In fact no such case has arisen in recent times and there are no such subordinate chiefs at present.

645 It is, however, customary for the cacique to delegate some of his functions to a vice-cacique or sub-cacique, called teburu- (or tepum-) ɛsi-yakon (the exact meaning of ɛsi is not clear to me, compare esa in to?-esa?, but yakon is "his younger brother" and gives a sufficient clue to the sense of the phrase). This is not a fixed or generally recognized office, but merely one that may be constituted if the cacique desires. The teburu-ɛsi-yakon may, for instance, be sent on official errands to convey the wishes of the teburu or may represent
[24] the latter in his absence. At present this function is fulfilled by Antonio Montesdeoca, nephew of Alejo Calcaño, who served as my interpreter during
645 most of this work. Although no such explicit statement was made, it is obvious
643 that Alejo has trained and is grooming Antonio as his successor and it is agreed that the evident wishes of the old cacique in such a matter weigh heavily in
[172] the selection of a new cacique. It was also stated that the wish for and the fact of growing contacts with the outer world make it desirable (Antonio says "necessary") to have a Spanish-speaking teburu, which at present automatically makes Antonio the only possible candidate, although Alejo is by no means an old man and his successor will probably not take office for many years, by which time the whole system may have collapsed if the present rate of change continues.

● [756] The cacique is not a shaman, or piache, at present or usually (nor is the probable successor of the present cacique) and this is neither a requirement nor
756 a recommendation for this office. The piaches, of whom there are several, are specialists in their own field, having nothing to do with the government of
[622] the tribe. Unlike so many Indian societies, the shaman is here entirely non-political and has no civil authority or influence beyond that entailed in the fact that he is ordinarily also a to?-esa?.

643 The cacique is respected and may be given first choice in the division of
[181] benefits, but he receives no emolument in labor or in goods and in the thoroughly democratic, individualistic society he is merely another, although an out-
[692] standing, individual. His duties are equally vague and light. He arbitrates what few interhousehold disputes occur, represents the tribe in contacts with others or with the Venezuelans, directs community undertakings and generally acts as the father of his people. We saw no instance when his orders were disobeyed and were told that none occur, but his orders are, in fact, hardly more than persuasive presentation of his wishes and opinions.

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5:Simpson N-5 (1939) 1940 SS16 Pemon SS16
Kamarakoto

228b

Fig. 75 — Kamarakoto Piache and Family.

A piache, his wife, and her two sons. From left to right these individuals are Nos. 39, 38, 40 and 41 of our detailed records. The two boys are the woman's sons by a previous marriage, adopted by her present husband. The family lives at Benné, where the man (pseudonym "Lorenzo") is to'-eta'.

collective, and priestly, and, on the other, as animistic, non-ritualistic, individual, and shamanistic. The former are religious in a more limited sense while the latter are predominantly magical as opposed to strictly religious. A given tribe usually shows a mixture of the two general types, sometimes in a single inseparable system with the same individuals acting as priests and shamans, and sometimes in a dual system with the priestly and shamanistic functions differentiated and delegated to different individuals. The Carib religion generally and that of the Kamarakotos specifically are almost purely shamanistic.

The Piache.

Like most other Caribs, the Kamarakotos have only one sort of mediator with the supernatural and he is technically a shaman, a medicineman, not a priest. I shall call this individual the piache, the common Venezuelan Spanish name, derived from the Carib word which in Kamarakoto is piatsan. There are at least three piaches in the central group of Kamarakotos and there are said to be several more among the more outlying Indians loosely affiliated with this tribe. In their daily lives the piaches are hardly distinguishable from anyone else (see Fig. 75).[1] Their supposed supernatural powers give them no particular additional prestige in civil matters and unlike most Indian priests (as distinct from shamans) they are not powerful political forces in the tribe.

The function of the piache is primarily and almost exclusively medical, but the medical system is spiritualistic or religious and not material. As a physician the piache derives his power not from any actual knowledge of diagnosis and physical treatment but from his ability to commune with and in some degree to control, or at least to influence, the supernatural world. To fulfill these functions, the piache requires knowledge of certain physical tricks, not unlike those of spirit mediums elsewhere, and rote memory of various charms and spells, mostly songs, that are not known to the layman.

To learn this trade the apprentice must be accepted as a colleague by a piache already established and by him be initiated into the secrets of the profession. He is required to fast for a long time, two or three months, drinking only water and eating only as much as is absolutely necessary to sustain life, so that he becomes extremely thin. After this preparation, a definite initiation occurs in which apparently only the initiate and his sponsor are involved. The latter gives the former an infusion of green tobacco in water, which is taken through the nostrils. The initiate becomes unconscious and remains so for some hours, normally about half a day. The piache then sings to the initiate, who, still unconscious or in a trance, eventually sits up and starts singing also. When he returns to normal, he is a piache in his own right. The exact details of this and other procedures and the texts of the songs are closely guarded secrets

[1] [For Fig. 75 see p. 228b, category 116 - Analyst]

● 756 unknown to any of my informants and the piaches themselves are quite unapproachable on the subject.[173]

756 776 [787] Piaimá, a supernatural being or spirit, is said to have initiated the first piaches into their mysteries by exactly the same procedure that I have described for the earthly piache's initiation of an apprentice. He is also said now to be corporeally visible to a piache (but to no one else) and to converse with and advise the piaches. Although I lack specific information on the point, it therefore seems highly probable that the initiation involves the invocation of Piaimá and that some, at least, of the various curative procedures also involve his presence and co-operation. However this may be, it is definite that the piaches are in rapport with Piaimá and that he is for them co-operative in some degree but that for other Indians and without the intervention of a piache he is exceedingly dangerous and may appear in the guise of a savage killer. He is thus essentially evil, a devil in fact, and the piaches derive much of their power through personal acquaintance with this devil and through their ability to temper his wrath or to direct his activities into desirable channels.

The Theory of Disease.

753 Although I shall not go into detail on this subject, the Kamarakoto theory of disease is so inextricably linked with magic and religion that it must be briefly summarized. It is not now true of the Kamarakotos, as has been stated for various Indian tribes, and probably was never true that they considered quite all ailments to be supernatural in origin. The manifest relationship between insect and snake bites and their immediate effects (but of course excluding malaria and other secondary effects) is naturally recognized. All swellings and ulcers are ascribed to such causes, even when this is not correct. It is not clear to me whether an ulcer, for instance, is supposed to be due to an actual bite, unnoticed at the time, or to the bite of a supernatural insect or snake. Although there is no clear recognition of their cause, colds, constipation, indigestion, and the like (but not the fever that may arise from these) are also now considered usually to have natural causes, although in this case one cannot be [755] sure that such an opinion is not relatively recent. For these ailments believed to be natural in origin spiritual remedies may nevertheless be applied, such as [757] remedial dancing for ulcers. Physical remedies, including various herbs and infusions, are, however, in common use for them and this purely medical subject is outside the scope of my report.

Diseases for which there is no obvious physical cause, particularly fevers [754] of any sort, are considered to be wholly supernatural in origin. These are usually caused by kanaimaton (plural; singular — kanaima).

173 [see footnote on p. 328, category 116 — Analyst]

754 824 361 principal reason why Kamarakotos are very reluctant to build houses in the forests and hesitant about traversing them, although they do so not infrequently.

352 532 ●756

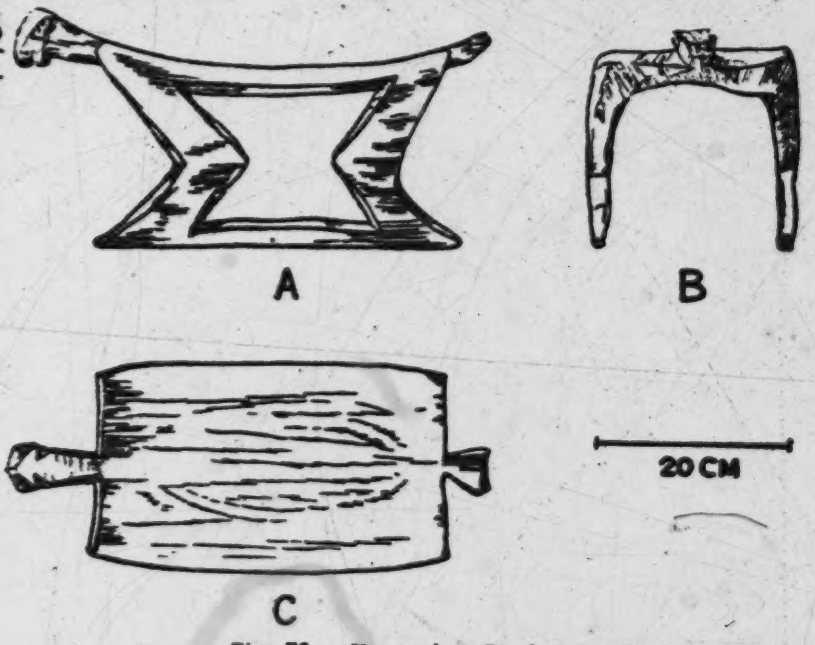

Fig. 76 — Kamarakoto Piache's Bench.
A typical murei, hewn from a single block of wood.

754 Although the kanaimaton play an important role as the theoretical instigators of physical diseases, it is also certain that belief in them produces serious and even mortal illnesses which are wholly psychic in origin. An Indian who is physically perfectly well sometimes believes that he has been attacked by a kanaima, lies down in his hammock, and refuses to rise or to eat, lapsing into a completely listless state, withdrawing into himself, paying no attention to his surroundings, and often developing a fever. If the kanaima is not successfully exorcized, the victim will die of this primarily psychic (but of course quite real) ailment just as surely as if it were primarily physical.

754 797 [illegible]14 The following is not repeated as a story that I believe, for I find the alleged act of the priest quite incredible, but as one that the Kamarakotos believe and that casts a little further light on this difficult subject. They informed me that a mission priest stationed with a related tribe one day sent an Indian boy alone to an isolated conuco in the forest and then slipped around by another way and hid there. When the boy arrived, the priest shouted without showing himself. This was a mortal attack on the boy with the priest acting as kanaima

754 [797] [128] and the boy returned, took to his hammock, developed a high fever, and was at death's door when he was finally saved by the priest's confessing his fault to the boy and withdrawing the kanaima influence. I personally did not witness such a case, but some of the cases of illness related to me by the Indians appeared to involve no possible physical cause and the statements of reliable non-Indian witnesses, traveling both among the Kamarakotos and among several allied tribes, leave no doubt that such cases do really occur.[175]

Other Medical and Similar Magic.

755 Although the piache is the magician and the physician, the use of magic is not entirely confined to him. There are some spells, not the exclusive property of the piache, that can be recited by the victim and by his friends, although these apparently are not considered really effective in severe cases or cases surely involving a kanaima. Koch-Grünberg gives the texts of several such spells from the Taurepáne. Some of them are related to birth, puberty, and other critical physical events and they constitute a simple sort of medical ceremonial which has magical implications but which cannot really be called religious. The idea of invocation of supernatural beings, an essentially religious aspect that is present in the activities of the piaches, is very attenuated or quite absent in these.

755 535 There are also medical dances which are analogous to these simpler spells and are called generically ɛremba. The most common is the okõyima-ɛremba, "big snake medicine-dance," which is effective against real bites and against ulcers, which are theoretically believed to be bites. No special costume is worn except bead necklaces and unlike social dances the men and women dance in separate groups. The dance begins at dusk and continues until the following dawn.

● 756 835 There is also a piache's dance, called mari, which is danced by everyone but led by a piache who sings and shouts. I could learn of no special religious significance for this dance but its ascription to the piache (whereas ordinary social dances are led by the cacique or any competent to?-esa?) suggests that it must have had some such particular significance originally.

535 [782] [533] [224] It is probable that most dances once had some magic significance if they did not definitely arise as magic or religious ceremonials. Thus the parichara songs given elsewhere are in effect quite typical hunting spells. The present-day Kamarakotos, however, informed me that the dances (excepting the ɛremba, of course) have for them absolutely no utilitarian, magical, or religious significance and that they are danced solely for pleasure. Certainly they are not treated as anything mystical and show no trace of true ritualism.

224 [789] Aside from medicine, magic does not figure to any great extent in Kamarakoto life but there is some hunting magic. Typical hunting magic with a

175 [see footnote on p. 328, category 116 - Analysis]

535 Aside from the parichara, the commonest dance is the tuküi' (Fig. 77), literally hummingbird, which is commonly, perhaps always, performed between sessions of the parichara, much as one might alternate waltzs and fox trots. [302] For the tuküi', the participants remove the parichara-pon and it has no special [534] costume although the body may be painted black and white for it.[180] It is also danced at any time and with the parichara instruments plus flageolets, flutes, or both. The rhythm is even simpler than that of the parichara, an almost unvarying 1-2, and the step is simply a slow shuffling or a rhythmically accented walk.

A less common dance (and one I did not myself see) is the warepan, which [302] can be danced only in the afternoon. The dancers are spotted from ankles to head with red paint ("onoto") and draped, in some way not clear from their descriptions, with cotton cloth. The ware and katoi? dances are danced only [56] at night, without costume. The mari dance is led and sung by a piache and considered a "piache's dance," but is danced by everyone and on social occasions. The various eremba dances, on the other hand, are strictly medicinal.

533 Singing by men characterizes the dances, but it is not confined to this sex or these occasions. Women frequently sing at their work, sing lullabies to the babies, etc.

Other Pastimes.

517 Dancing and drinking are the favorite but by no means the only diversions of the Indians. Some productive activities, notably fish-poisoning, are such gay social occasions that they seem more like games than like work. There are also true games that are enjoyed in place of (or generally in addition to) dancing 526 — nothing takes the place of drinking. Of these a favorite is a combination [273] race and wrestling match followed by drinking and, frequently, also dancing. Starting at a given point, some distance away (it may be several kilometers), the racers make for a house where a batch of kachiri has been prepared. Here other men wait at the door, and as the runners arrive, their way into the house is blocked and a wrestling match ensues. If a runner can make his way into the house without being thrown (or losing his footing) he rushes up and touches the kachiri trough, whereupon the women, who have been waiting inside, pour kachiri on him — a singular reward for victory. General drinking follows.

Wrestling (Fig. 78) is a favorite sport among both men and boys, but is quite unlike our version. One contestant grasps the other around the waist and without changing his grip endeavors to force the opponent off his feet. This opponent does not ordinarily grasp the first, but otherwise struggles and tries to defeat his purpose, winning if he can break away without losing his footing.

Swimming, which is a great sport especially among the boys, is mentioned elsewhere.

180 [see footnote on p. 329, category 116 - Analyst]

[text continues on p. 249]

435 172. The literature, especially that of travel as opposed to scientific study, is full of ridicule of the Indians because they do not know the intrinsic worth of articles. These statements are usually naive because they show that it is the traveler, who did not know what "intrinsic worth" means. Except for jewelry and a few other uses unknown to the Indians, gold has no intrinsic worth. In our civilization, but not that of the Indians, it has an extrinsic worth as a token of the real value that it in itself does not intrinsically have. When an Indian picks up a nugget and trades it for a needle, he gets by far the best of the bargain on the basis of intrinsic worth: he gets something that he could not make and that is of great use to him for something that cost him no real work and that is worthless to him, and so gets something for nothing. It must not be supposed, however, that there are any Indians left, even beyond the limits of intensive exploration, who do not now have a better idea than this of the value (to the traveler) of gold, or of other articles of regular trade.

114 173. Koch-Grünberg, who seems to have penetrated farther than anyone
● 756 else into Carib religion, gives the texts of several Taurepán magic spells, but these were apparently common property and not exclusive to the piaches.

114 174. No mention was ever made of the use of a rattle, maraka, by the
534 piache and since this is almost universal and is indeed believed by some to be
755 the primary purpose of the maraka, I feared that I had missed an essential point.
[171] I now learn, however, on Koch-Grünberg's unimpeachable authority that Taurepán piaches do not use the maraka, and this must be true also of the Kamarakotos.

754 175. The following remarkable incident was related to me by Marie
123 Angel as having occurred during her previous visit to the tribe. One of the boys employed at the camp was seized by a kanaima and retired to his hammock to die. All entreaties to him fell on deaf ears and Mrs. Angel finally said in his presence, through an interpreter, that if he was going to die anyway she was not going to have him do so at length in her camp, that she was going to get a gun and if he was still in his hammock when she returned, she would put him out of his misery. When she approached with the gun, the boy suddenly sprang from the hammock and ran off, entirely cured. Since Indians do certainly die from such attacks, this anecdote is not to be taken as evidence that they are feigned.

764 176. But I did not open these because this would certainly have been re-
123 sented and the friendship of the living was far more essential to my work than this slight additional knowledge of the dead.